



## **Enhancing Services Coordinator Skills and Knowledge: Real Choice Core Competencies**

This document outlines a strength-based approach to enhance the skills and knowledge of services coordinators in key identified competency areas. The Real Choice guiding principles including authority, freedom, support, rights and responsibility will be infused into each of the competencies. These core competencies would apply to services coordinators who work with individuals who receive aging services, and children or adults with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioral health or medically complex needs and will serve as the underlying foundation for all levels of the training. Each competency is subdivided into skill areas and activities for that specific skill. The core competencies addressed include:

### **Values & Philosophy of Real Choice**

- 1. Consumer\* Directed Philosophy**
- 2. Effective Communication**
- 3. Cultural Sensitivity/Competency**

### **Implement Practices Based on Philosophy of Real Choice**

- 4. Identification of Informal and Formal Supports**
- 5. Strength Based Assessment**
- 6. Consumer Directed Planning**
- 7. Self-Advocacy Skills**
- 8. Rights and Responsibilities**
- 9. Risk and Safety**
- 10. Quality Assurance**
- 11. Transition**

### **Disability Specific Knowledge and Resources**

- 12. Cross Disability Knowledge**
- 13. Knowledge of Services/Resources/Supports**

**\*For purposes of this document “Consumer” is defined as an individual with a disability or a family member of a child with a disability.**

# Enhancing Services Coordinator Skills and Knowledge: Real Choice Core Competencies

## Values & Philosophy of Real Choice

### COMPETENCY AREA 1: CONSUMER-DIRECTED PHILOSOPHY

*1. Demonstrate and promote the values and beliefs related to the principles of consumer-directed services.*

#### SKILL-1:

Services coordinators implement the key elements to consumer-directed services.

Activities:

- Services coordinators have knowledge of the principles of consumer-direction including:
  - Choice
  - Freedom
  - Authority
  - Rights
  - Responsibility
  - Supports
- Services coordinators are sensitive when interacting with individuals who have different values.
- Services coordinators are flexible in accessing services and supports.
- Services coordinators support the person in accessing inclusive community services.

### COMPETENCY AREA 2: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

*2. Create an environment that fosters partnerships with consumer and representatives of informal and formal supports by effective communication and informed decision-making.*

#### SKILL-1:

Services coordinators use effective and sensitive communication skills to build rapport. <sup>HSRI</sup>

Activities:

- Services coordinators use active listening skills that are sensitive to cultural and individual communication differences. <sup>HSRI</sup>
- Services coordinators communicate with individuals in a manner that exemplifies respect, dignity, and conveys acceptance of the individual.
- Services coordinators use alternative communications (e.g. sign language), gain access to interpreters or can secure assistive technology devices as appropriate. <sup>HSRI</sup>
- Services coordinators use communication that is clear and consistent.
- Services coordinators maintain confidentiality.
- Services coordinators always assure that consumers participate in any meeting about them (“Nothing about me – without me”).

<sup>HSRI</sup> Based on Human Services Research Institute (1996). The community Support Skill Standards: Tools for Managing Change and Achieving Outcomes

#### SKILL-2:

Services coordinators support informed decision-making by the individual.

Activities:

- Services coordinators assist the person in using effective problem-solving techniques including:
  - Explore options available.
  - Evaluate pros and cons of each option.
  - Make informed decision based on information.
- Services coordinators support the individual in accessing relevant information to make informed decisions
- Services coordinators support the individual to make voluntary informed decisions based on the person's capacity to understand information.

### COMPETENCY AREA 3: CULTURAL SENSITIVITY/COMPETENCY

#### 3. *Demonstrate cultural sensitivity/competency*

##### SKILL-1:

Services coordinators demonstrate cultural awareness and sensitivity in their interactions with individuals with disabilities.

Activities:

- Services coordinators have knowledge about an individual person's unique culture.
- Services coordinators have knowledge of community resources related to an individual's unique culture.
- Services coordinators acknowledge, honor and respect the beliefs, values, attitudes and practices of culturally diverse groups.
- Services coordinators understand and effectively respond to culturally diverse differences.
- Services coordinators make adaptations to the delivery of services and supports to reflect the individual's unique culture.

### IMPLEMENT PRACTICES BASED ON PHILOSOPHY OF REAL CHOICE

### COMPETENCY AREA 4: IDENTIFICATION OF INFORMAL AND FORMAL SUPPORTS

#### 4. *Support consumer's exploration of options including the development of informal supports and access to formal supports.*

##### SKILL-1:

Services coordinators demonstrate knowledge of community resources, program rules and regulations, emergency community services, service systems' mandates and limitations, and funding possibilities.

Activities:

- Services Coordinators provide the individual with information on the strengths and limitations of community options,
- Services Coordinators identify relevant and accurate information about providers, costs, types of services, quality of services, and effectively communicate information to the individual.
- Services Coordinators share information with the individual on various programs' eligibility criteria.
- Services Coordinators identify the amount of financial resources available to the person for supports.

**SKILL-2:**

Services coordinators work in partnership with the individual in accessing information about community resources and developing his/her own informal support services.

Activities:

- Services Coordinators problem-solve with the individual to explore individualized options for informal and formal support resources in the community based on the person's needs. This includes looking beyond the current menu of services and supports - thinking outside the box.
- Services Coordinators develop an effective dynamic partnership with the individual that is built on mutual respect.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in developing and enhancing informal support networks.
- Services Coordinators maximize fiscal resources to best support each person's plan of choice.

## COMPETENCY AREA 5: STRENGTH-BASED ASSESSMENT

5. *Services coordinators support consumer's in the completion of a strength-based assessment process to identify needs and preferences.*

**SKILL-1:**

Services coordinators effectively gather information to discover the individual's gifts, talents, abilities, needs, and preferences.

Activities:

- Services Coordinators collaborate with the person in a positive way to discover the individual's strengths, gifts, needs, and preferences.
- Services Coordinators focus on the individual's abilities and strengths.
- Services Coordinators explain the assessment process to the individual in a manner that is clear and understandable. <sup>HSRI</sup>
- Services Coordinators acknowledge the individual's authority to determine needs.
- Services Coordinators acknowledge, understand, and respect the individual's strength, cultural beliefs, preferences, and values throughout the assessment process.
- Services Coordinators partner with the individual to gather assessment information in an objective and unobtrusive manner. <sup>HSRI</sup>

## COMPETENCY AREA 6: CONSUMER-DIRECTED PLANNING

6. Services Coordinators partner with the individual to facilitate consumer-directed planning.

**SKILL-1:**

Services Coordinators are skilled in supporting the individual in developing a plan that is based on the person's strengths, preferences, needs and interests.

Activities:

- Services Coordinators assist the individual in determining the individual's personal goals.
- Services Coordinators partner with the person to determine available financial resources.
- Services Coordinators support the person in using a range of participatory planning techniques as part of the individual directed planning process. <sup>HSRI</sup>
- Services Coordinators help the individual to use findings from assessments to develop strategies to obtain needed resources and supports. <sup>HSRI</sup>
- Services Coordinators accept the authority of the individual to direct the development of the plan.
- Services Coordinators serve as liaisons with the person's selected providers.
- Services Coordinators support the individual in conflict resolution.

**SKILL-2:**

Services Coordinators partner with the individual to facilitate the implementation of the individualized plan to achieve outcomes based on the individual's strengths, preferences, needs and interests.

**Activities:**

- Services Coordinators assess the person's need for services coordination.
- Services Coordinators support the individual in the process of recruiting desired resources/services.
  - identify personal expectation of services.
  - locate HHSS approved services providers that meet that expectation.
  - initiate requests for identified services within available formal and informal resources.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in making decisions and designing plans to minimize risk.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in developing a safety plan.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in establishing and maintaining a process to carry out daily tasks (e.g., household chores, personal care)

**SKILL-3:**

Services Coordinators assist in meeting the individual's needs by teaching skills and providing supports to maximize individual's skills, abilities and independence.

**Activities:**

- Services Coordinators work with individual to determine interest and ability in self directing supports.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual through coaching and mentoring to achieve skills to become more independent.
- Services Coordinators identify appropriate supports for the individual to acquire desired skills (e.g., help with checkbook, budgeting, meal planning).

**SKILL-4:**

Services coordinators assist individual in the process of employing support workers.

**Activities:**

- Services Coordinators assist individual in recruitment, interviewing, and discharging support workers as part of the employment process.
- Services Coordinators support individual in training and managing supports and /or personal care staff. <sup>HSRI</sup>

**COMPETENCY AREA 7:  
SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS****7. Promote individual's self-advocacy skills and ability to direct individual's own services.****SKILL-1:**

Services Coordinators demonstrate the ability to identify issues that need to be addressed through advocacy.

**Activities:**

- Services Coordinators support individual in exercising advocacy skills by:
  - gathering information regarding the advocacy issue.

- reviewing and analyzing the gathered information.
- designing advocacy action steps to resolve the issue.
- Services Coordinators connect individual with advocacy organizations in the community to enhance individual's understanding of the range of advocacy services and advice offered. <sup>HSRI</sup>
- Services Coordinators have current knowledge of laws, services, and community resources to assist and educate participants to secure needed formal and informal supports. <sup>HSRI</sup>
- Services Coordinators provide the individual with information regarding individual's rights and service options.

## COMPETENCY AREA 8: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITY

8. Support individual's understanding of and ability to exercise rights and responsibilities.

### SKILL-1:

Services Coordinators recognize that the authority of decision-making rests with the individual and supports the person to exercise rights commensurate with the person's ability.

Activities:

- Services Coordinators assist the individual in understanding the various rights.
- Services Coordinators provide accurate and relevant information for the individual to make choices.
- Services Coordinators support the individual in decision making, examining consequences of decisions, and recognizing that with control come responsibilities.
- Services Coordinators maintain confidentiality.
- Services Coordinators obtain informed consent from the individual when necessary.

## COMPETENCY AREA 9: RISK AND SAFETY

9. Support individual to balance risk, safety, and security as part of an informed decision-making process.

### SKILL-1:

Services Coordinators support the individual to make his/her own decisions while facing some exposure to risk.

Activities:

- Services Coordinators assist individual in addressing health and safety issues.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in the process of determining his/her level of acceptable risk.
- Services Coordinators partner with the individual in the development of a risk management plan.
- Services Coordinators provide ongoing supports to the individual through advice, teaching, and mentoring to minimize potential risks.
- Services Coordinators support individual in addressing crises.

## COMPETENCY AREA 10: QUALITY ASSURANCE

10. Support individual in the process of monitoring the quality of his/her services/supports.

### SKILL-1:

Services Coordinators assist the individual in identifying desired expectations and quality of supports in order to assure that services are provided at the level that meets the individual's expectations and the self- directed plan.

Activities:

- Services Coordinators assist the individual in describing his/her expectations of services.
- Service Coordinators support the individual in monitoring the delivery of services.
- Services Coordinators meet with the individual regularly to review the quality of services.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in resolving issues when the delivery of service does not meet the person's expectations.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in managing quality of services by:
  - Maintaining a positive interaction between the individual and various service providers.
  - Assuring that public dollars are used appropriately.

#### **COMPETENCY AREA 11: TRANSITION**

11. Support individual in the process of a transition (e.g., age, program, life change).

##### **SKILL-1:**

Services coordinators support the individual when changes occur in the person's life (e.g. graduation from high school, changes from one disability program to another disability program)

Activities:

- Services Coordinators assist the individual by providing information about possible options.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in evaluating the options based on:
  - The person's expectations
  - Eligibility requirements
  - Quality of Services begin considered
  - Costs
  - Location
  - On-site visit
- Services Coordinators partner with the individual to design a transition plan outlining how the person will smoothly transition from one environment to another.
- Services Coordinators assist the individual in implementing the transition plan.
- Services Coordinators support the individual to resolve conflicts during transition.

#### **DISABILITY SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES**

#### **COMPETENCY AREA 12: CROSS DISABILITY KNOWLEDGE**

12. Services coordinators demonstrate general awareness/knowledge relating to the conditions of developmental disabilities, aging, behavioral health, physical disabilities, and complex medical conditions.

##### **SKILL-1:**

Services coordinators have knowledge of methods for gathering disability information.

Activities:

- Services coordinators have knowledge of applied research methods.

- Services coordinators have ability to locate and access information on characteristics of various disability groups.
- Services coordinator can access resources to gain information on specific disabilities and health conditions.

#### **SKILL-2:**

Services coordinators gather information on specific disability and medical conditions of individual.

Activities:

- Services coordinators have knowledge of various disabilities including definition, etiology, and prevention.
- Services coordinators have knowledge of where to access information on various services and supports usually provided to assist an individual with a specific disability.
- Services coordinators have knowledge of various eligibility requirements including income, type and level of disability, level of support needs, age, and medical needs.

#### **SKILL-3:**

Services Coordinators demonstrate knowledge about how the disability impacts a person's life and how one disability relates to another.

Activities:

- Services coordinators are sensitive of various disability conditions including but not limited to:
  - Individual's ability to communicate.
  - Individual's ability to perform work activities.
  - Individual's ability to perform daily living activities.
  - Individual's ability to cope with stress related to disability.
  - Individual's ability to perform recreational and leisure activities.
- Services coordinators have an understanding of how the various disabilities relate across disability groups including but not limited to:
  - Individual with behavioral health needs and substance abuse.
  - Individual with developmental disabilities and behavioral health needs.
  - Individual with physical disabilities and behavioral health needs.
  - Individual with medical needs and aging.
  - Individual with developmental disabilities and aging needs.
- Services coordinators have an understanding of techniques to personally relate with individuals with various types of disabilities.
- Services coordinators provide consumer the opportunity to educate them (Services Coordinators) regarding their disability.
- Services coordinators provide opportunity for consumer to explain how disabilities affect functional abilities.

### **COMPETENCY AREA 13: KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICES/RESOURCES/SUPPORTS**

13. Services coordinators demonstrate knowledge of services, resources, and/or supports available to the above populations and awareness of the functions of services and supports across systems.

#### **SKILL-1:**



**Demonstrate ability to identify resource options across disability groups related to the individual's needs.**

**Activities:**

- **Services Coordinators demonstrate awareness of the different programs and services in local community and statewide.**
  - **Know who to contact.**
  - **Know what the purpose of the service is.**
  - **Know how the resource could be of benefit to the person.**
  - **Know eligibility criteria.**
  - **Know pros and cons of each service including benefits and limitations.**

#### **SKILL-2:**

**Services Coordinators demonstrate ability to mix and match resources and services to benefit the person (e.g., SSI, Medicaid, private volunteer groups)**

**Activities:**

- **Services Coordinators have knowledge of various federal and state benefit resources.**
  - **What the benefit pays and does not pay.**
  - **How a person enrolls.**
  - **Which benefits can be combined?**
  - **How to stay within the benefit requirements but still maximize the benefit to fit the individual's needs.**

#### **SKILL-3:**

**Services Coordinators demonstrate ability to initiate and participate in resource development activities if needed services and supports are not available.**

**Activities:**

- **Services Coordinators have community connections to develop services based on individual's needs when supports are not currently available (e.g., church groups, civic organizations, trade organizations, self-help support groups, neighborhood associations).**
- **Services Coordinators work with local resource developers to meet individual's needs.**